

UROLOGY

The elevator door slid shut and Ruth leaned against the wall and closed her eyes. "I'm too old for this," she said. The baby wiggled in her arms, gave a little beep of a cry, and settled back to sleep.

Her husband Ellis said, "Hell, Ruth, forty-seven's not that old. Lots of women have babies at that age." She opened her eyes into little slit openings and looked at him: a rumpled, balding, overweight man holding a flower arrangement with a floating blue IT'S A BOY balloon in one hand and her jam-packed overnight bag in the other.

"You're an old fool, Ellis," she said. "And you're getting a vasectomy before you even think about sleeping in the same room with me."

He cringed at the very thought. "What? Me, go under the knife?" he said.

"Yes you, you old goat. Or you're going to become very familiar with the couch."

They moved across the parking lot slowly, Ruth slightly spread-legged and slightly bent. The tethered balloon followed them reluctantly, bobbing and tugging at its cord. Ellis took the lead and arrived at the car first. He set his load down and opened the trunk. "Don't load it up, yet," said Ruth. "I wanna change little Roy's diaper." She set the boy down in the hub of the wheel of the spare tire. He wiggled and moved his arm over his head. "He looks like a little angel, doesn't he?" said Ruth, smiling tiredly. She spread the blanket and unfastened the boy's diaper.

Ellis said, "Look at the cock on that kid, will ya? You can sure tell whose boy he is, huh?" giving his wife an elbow.

"Shut up and get me a clean diaper," said Ruth.

He leaned over and rooted in Ruth's overnight bag. Ruth traced her finger on the baby's cheek and smiled. And the baby let loose with a spout of water. Ruth stepped to the side. The water shot up in a solid stream, arcing out of the trunk, and broke into golden globules on its downward journey. They thunked down on the blue balloon, knocking it away, and splattered on the old man's head as he came up with a fresh diaper. "What the hell?" said Ellis. "S'it rainin' or what?"

"Give me the diaper," said Ruth, smiling broadly. "You been christened, Dad."

"What?" said Ellis, holding his palm out and looking at the sky. "Tell me that was rain. It was, wasn't it?"

Ruth's mom came to visit and help with the new baby. She cornered Ellis when he walked in the door with the over-night bag and the flower arrangement with the helium balloon. She said, "If you don't get yourself fixed, Pancho, I'll do it myself some night while you're asleep. You two are too damned old for kids."

"I told him as much myself, Mom," said Ruth, as she walked softly through the door with the precious little accident in her arms.

The ladies took the baby to the bedroom and clucked and cooed over him. Ellis got on the phone to the urologist and made an appointment. Then he hid all the knives.

Dr. Warner was one funny guy. He kept a chain saw in a bottom drawer in the operating room. They had Ellis laid out, naked and shaved. The doctor came up with the 'power scalpel.' He pulled the cord and it roared and farted black smoke. Ellis took off, screaming like Tarzan. Ruth and Mom tackled him as he attempted to exit the waiting room. It took both ladies, three orderlies, and one of Ruth's pile-driving punches to the gut to get him back into the operating room.

Dr. Warner chuckled and said, "What's the matter, Ellis, can't you take a joke?" as he stropped his straight razor on the leather strap that hung from the wall next to the balance scale.

Ellis sat on the couch with an ice pack in his crotch. His scrotum was a bruised maroon color and swelled so big it looked like there were a couple of grapefruits inside. He drank beer for the pain. Ruth's mom hogged the T.V., forcing him to watch the soaps during his recuperation, but at least the old bat made refrigerator runs for him.

"Mom," he said. "Be an old sweetheart and get me another brew. I'm starting to throb."

She waved him off. "You're gonna have to hang on for a second, Pancho," she said, her eyes glued to the tube. "I think this girl's about to get some action." And the girl was indeed getting some action, from a tall dark stranger with a mustache. He cornered her behind a huge leafed house plant and groped her up and down, while Ellis groaned and whimpered so much that he finally got on Mom's nerves. "Oh Christ," she said. "You're such a baby." She got up and got a beer out of the refrigerator and tossed it at her low-pain-threshold son-in-law. He

didn't see it coming in time and it landed in his lap. His scream rattled the windows and woke the baby, and got the next-door neighbor, Clete, on the phone to the cops, because he was sure that somebody had just been murdered at Ruth and Ellis' house.

PIZZA BLUES

Clete and his neighbor Ellis called De Nio's Pizza and had a big one delivered. Clete stifled the driver and carried the hot box out to the patio so they could sit in the lawn chairs and eat their feast to the sound of the pool filter's sighs.

Ellis lifted the first wedge, trailing a string of cheese all the way back to the box, but before he could bite into it Clete's wife's Chihuahua, Ginger, charged out the doggie door, leaped and snatched the fragrant triangle, and hit the ground running.

Ellis screamed, "YOU LITTLE BITCH," and jumped up and kicked at her, landing a glancing blow to her hindquarters, sending her spinning, with her booty, into the deep end of the pool.

Clete said, "I'd leave that dog alone if I were you, Ellis. That's Juanita's baby."

But Ellis didn't listen: he grabbed the long handled, two-pronged fork from the rack on the side of Clete's BBQ and ran around the side of the pool, stabbing at the dog-paddling thief, while Clete giggled and said, "Get her, Queequeg, get her."

Juanita came home from the mall and caught him at it. She kicked his ass, and she kicked Clete's ass too, for not standing up and protecting her baby. Then she tossed them both into the pool and scooped Ginger to safety with the long-handled skimming net.

Ginger got a quick towel drying and a fresh slice of the pie, and the men got their brains rattled by the handle end of the metal skimming net, wielded by Juanita. She bounced it off one head and then the other, forcing Clete and Ellis to seek temporary refuge under the cool, silent water, where they communicated with grunts and squeals and hand gestures.